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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/940,592	08/29/2001	Masato Ishizawa	NIP-240	5021
7590	03/16/2004			
MATTINGLY, STANGER & MALUR, P.C. Suite 370 1800 Diagonal Road Alexandria, VA 22314			EXAMINER LUDLOW, JAN M	
			ART UNIT 1743	PAPER NUMBER

DATE MAILED: 03/16/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/940,592

Applicant(s)

ISHIZAWA ET AL.

Examiner

Jan M. Ludlow

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 4-6 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 29 August 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- 1) ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - 2) ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 - 3) ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 8/29/01.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

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1. Claims 4-6 are objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c) as being in improper form because a multiple dependent claim must refer to the claims from which it depends in the alternative, e.g., "any one of claims 1-3". Further claims 5-6 are improper for being multiply dependent from another multiply dependent claim. See MPEP § 608.01(n).

Accordingly, the claims have not been further treated on the merits.

2. Claim 3 is objected to because of the following informalities: In line 5, "said preset position" lacks antecedence. Appropriate correction is required.

3. The information disclosure statement filed October 17, 2003 fails to comply with 37 CFR 1.98(a)(1), which requires a list of all patents, publications, or other information submitted for consideration by the Office. It has been placed in the application file, but the information referred to therein has not been considered.

There is no PTO form 1449 filed October 17, 2003 of record.

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 2000-171470 (hereafter, JP).

JP teaches an automated analyzer having means 2 to drive a pipette 105, which pipette transfers fluid from a first container 101 to second container 106, where a reaction is detected with analyzing photometer 115. A detector 150 detects the type of

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first container, and a computer 103 uses the detected type of container to determine the height at which the probe is stopped during lowering to permit the discharge of static electricity or other noise (see, e.g., paragraphs [0008] and [0011]). The probe is then lowered into the fluid and the fluid level detected by detector 151. The speed of descent to the stop is greater than the speed of descent to the fluid level. With respect to "means for detecting the height of the first container," although the text does not explicitly specify that the height of the container is detected, it is the examiner's position that the means for detecting the type of container of the prior art is the same as the instantly disclosed means for detecting height of the container—see, e.g., instant claim 2. Alternatively, it is the examiner's position that detecting container type and adjusting the distance traveled according to the type of container inherently includes a height determination.

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

7. Dales et al teach pausing a cannula above the rim of a mixing chamber in an autoanalyzer [0127].

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jan M. Ludlow whose telephone number is (571) 272-1260. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday, 11:30 am - 8:00 pm.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jill A. Warden can be reached on (571) 272-1267. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Jan M. Ludlow
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1743

Jml
March 3, 2004